

Venice, Italy, Sat. Evening, Apr. 6th 1889.

My Dear Wife; You will see by the heading of this letter that I am now in what was once the Queen City of the Seas. I left Vienna yesterday morning at 7 o'clock and reached Trieste, on the Adriatic, at 10 last night. The ride yesterday was a very enjoyable one, but different from what I expected. Two hours after leaving Vienna, we came into a mountainous region which continued all day.

At dark we were in the midst of wild mountain scenery, and I believe it continued nearly to Trieste.

A portion of the way, it reminded me a good deal of the Cheat River region on the B. & O. R.R. The engineering in the construction of the road was bold and difficult. At one point, for some miles the road is said to have cost £30,000, or \$250,000 - per miles.

At the highest point on the road they have erected a monument to the Engineer who built it. From 7 in the morning until dark, snow was in sight all the time, and in the middle of the day snow was lying beside the track here and there. Some of the views were very grand and beautiful. Much of the way the mountain peaks consisted of rugged, and in many places perpendicular, limestone cliffs.

It was a very different country from what I had supposed before making the trip. Of course the country was sparsely settled, but here and there were large mining and manufacturing towns and cities. Every once in a while we would see the ruins of some old castle which I suppose was, some centuries back, the abode of some robber chieftain; at least many of them served that purpose.

Some of them are put to far better use now than when they were first erected.

It has taken the world a long time to learn that Man's highest mission is not to be served, but to serve; and notwithstanding the great example which was given us of this some nineteen centuries ago, but the smaller number seem to have learned it yet. Even among those who profess to be his followers, how few there are who seem to have thoroughly grasped and received this great fundamental principle of perfect humanity. But I must not moralize in this way.

The ride yesterday grew a little tiresome. An uncom-
fortable seat, made of a hard board does not seem to
have much spring in it after you have been seated
upon it for ten or twelve hours. I have now tried
riding in all three classes of cars in Europe. I rode
first class from Bremer Haven to Bremen. That was in-
cluded in my steamer ticket. All the rest of my riding has
been third class until to-day, when I concluded to take sec-
ond class from Trieste to Venice. I do not think I will
venture on third class in Italy. When I got to

Trieste last night, I was undecided which hotel to stop
at. I finally concluded to try the Europa, but I shall
not stop there again. I think they try to do the best they

know how, but the difficulty is they don't know how.
Everything seemed clean, and I had a large room with
two beds, but I only occupied one of them. The pillow
was hard, the covers were rough and the room had a
very musty smell. I immediately threw the window

open and aired it, and then slept with my flannels on.
I was tired and got a pretty comfortable night's
sleep after all, and felt very well this morning.

To-day I had a pleasant ride with fine see-
ing all the way. For some miles out of Trieste, the railway is
built along the steep hill-side skirting the bay, at an elevation
of 30 to 100 feet, at first afterwards more, above the water.
This gives a beautiful view. The steep hillside below and
above is built into terraces by stone walls, and on the terraces
are growing grapevines and fruit trees, with an oc-
casional garden plot. The terraces are by no means reg-
ular, but are built of all shapes and sizes, only there
are no large ones. I saw a good many peach, or
apricot trees in full bloom, although the day was cool
enough for a good overcoat. For quite a num-

ber of miles from Trieste the country was the stoniest
one my eyes ever beheld. But after that we pass-
ed through a beautiful country, with distant mountains
for a time on both sides, and then only on the right,
or North. They were the Eastern portion of the Alps, and
their summits were covered with snow.

Well, I expect you have been waiting fa-
tiently for me to say something about Venice.

I am at a loss to know what to say.
The Railway Station is at one end of The Grand Canal,
and my hotel, "The Britannia", is at the other end.

I thought I was going to get a ride in a gondola
the entire length, but the Gondolier was too smart for
that. If you will look at the map of Venice in Isaac-
Decker's Northern Italy, you will see it is very crooked.
So the Gondolier "cut across lots", going through small
canals, and thus greatly shortened the distance.

On the way, however, I got a glimpse of the "Rialto"

After getting my room arranged for at the hotel, I went out the back way into a narrow paved alley, and started out on an exploring expedition. In five minutes I entered the square of St. Mark's, at the opposite end from the Church. My first impression was one of disappointment. It appeared to me that Venice, altogether, and St. Mark's in particular (both Church and surroundings) was a most wonderful and entirely unique specimen of "decayed gentility." But after looking longer and more carefully, the Church especially began to grow upon me. It certainly is a most wonderful and indescribable structure. When I get home I think, by the aid of some photographs, I can help you to get some idea of it. But it is useless to attempt it in a letter, and without photographs and drawings of some kind. After spending a little time in the square and church, I went on to the Post Office, thinking possibly I might find a letter, but did not. I then walked a little further to the "Rialto" Bridge. The steps are broad and low, made of stone with a front edge of marble. There is a flight up from each side, with a level space on top. The entire width of the bridge must be some 60 feet. A middle walk some 16 ft. wide, on either side of this a row of little shops or stores running right across over the bridge, and then another stairway of 8 ft wide on either side, the one, of course, looking up the Canal, the other down. These outer stairs are guarded by a marble railing. But of all the little, narrow, irregular, alleys, or walks, between high houses. The walks all paved with stone or marble, and varying in width from perhaps 5 ft. to 15 or 20. If you know the general direction you want to go, you can find your way through somehow. There came up a shower of rain, and as I did not have my umbrella with me, I walked around the Colonnades of St. Mark's Place till it quit, and then came back to the hotel. It was now about 6 o'clock. I went out to the front of the hotel and listened for an hour to the ringing and pealing and chiming of the bells of Venice. Then I came to my room and began this letter and listened to the bells while I wrote, for well on to another hour. They have ceased now, and the city seems very quiet. Just think of a large city without a horse or a wheeled vehicle of any kind, unless perchance a whiffarrow. Take every horse and every wheeled vehicle out of one of our American Cities, and can you im-

agree the change? Although I am in Italy
and it is April, it is by no means warm. I am
writing this sitting in my room with my heavy
overcoat buttoned up and collar turned up, and my
hat on. The ceiling of my room is quite high
and an incandescent electric light hangs from the
centre but it is so high that it is not quite pleasant
to read or write by. It is about ten feet from the
floor. There is a good elevator in the hotel.
I have a very nice good, well-furnished room,
excellent bed, &c. The hotel is exceedingly admirably
kept. I pay $8\frac{3}{4}$ cents per day for room, light and
attendance. I get my meals where I please
and pay for what I get. I think, however, living
will be cheap. I do hope your knee is
better before this, and that you are well as usual
otherwise. You do not say very definitely about
yourself, except your knee. I mailed you a
letter Thursday evening at Vienna. I hope I
shall get another letter from you by Monday.
I hear music and singing downstairs some-
where. There are quite a number of English and
American people here, and the most of the hotel go-
ple speak English. A young man from New-York
came in on the same train with me, and has the
next room to mine. Some bells are ringing beau-
tifully again. Well, I must close now, for
I need a good night's sleep which I hope to get.
I want to hunt up the Scotch Church to-mor-
row. I do not know whether I shall get out on
the water in the morning to hear the bells, or not.
If it is clear I shall try to do so.
Remember me to all. With much love, good night.

It is now seven o'clock
Sunday evening. I had closed the board shutters of
my window last night, and did not know how late
it was this morning. I got up a quarter past seven.
By the time I got dressed and through with
breakfast, it was nearly nine o'clock. I inquired
for the Scotch Church, but found it had been closed
a good while ago. So the only church for me was
the English (Episcopal) Chapel. I had quite
a hunt for it. It seems it has been moved to another
or building, some distance from where it was.
At last, however, I got there, though a little late.
There was quite a large congregation, in an upstairs
hall. The service was pleasant, the ser-
mon moderate. The preacher, I should judge, is
moderately "lony", from an episcopal stand-point.

Still, I enjoyed the service, and I think I got
some good from it. It seemed good to hear sing-
ing and preaching in the English language in
this place where I hear so little that I can under-
stand. After Church was over I walked
around a little in that part of town, and then
came back and went on to St. Marks. I went
into the church and staid awhile, and then went to
a Restaurant just adjoining the church and got
some dinner. It was a bright, pleasant after-
noon, and I saw two or three strolling up the
bell-tower. I went with them. The view from
thence is a most remarkable and beautiful one.
After coming down, I saw a young man
standing looking at the church. He looked as
though he had sense enough to speak English.
I asked him, and found he was a young
architect from Philadelphia. Although it had
been so bright and pleasant, a shower of
rain came up, and in a little I came back
to the hotel. Some time after, as I was sit-
ting in the Reading Room, I heard a couple of young
men speak about the sunset. It had cleared off
by this time. About half-past five I went out,
and readily saw the only place from which I
could see the Sun set was from the Bell Tower of
St. Marks. So I went up to the church and found
a couple of men just starting up, and I joined
the procession. It was not so near the time
for sunset as I had thought, and I had to re-
main up about an hour. As the wind was
blowing some it was cold, although I had my
heavy overcoat on. The view was a very
beautiful one indeed. I then came down
and came to my room. I have been
listening to the Church bells a good part of the
day. They rang a good while in the morning,
a good while in the middle of the day, some
more at three o'clock, and then towards six
they began again, and some of them are
not through yet. I shall long remember the
bells of Venice.

How I do wish you were with me and that we could take the trip leisurely and comfortably, so that you could enjoy it. I hope to-morrow to get around the city, some in a Gondola, and also see the Doge's Palace, see more of St. Mark's, the Glass Works, &c. Gondolier riding is very cheap. You can get one for 20 cts. the first hour, and 10 cts. each additional hour. But the Gondolier expects a little gratuity besides, and I think he earns it. French money is very good for gratuities. You can give a great large coin with 10 on it; and you have only given 2 cents. I think I shall probably leave here on Wednesday and go to Bologna. I should be glad to stay longer, but my time is limited, and there are many other things I wish to see. Then distances are not great here, and after all, there are only two or three buildings to which you need to give much time. I shall make a short stay in Bologna. A day, or part of a day. I want to get to Rome by Friday, if I can. Venice must be a lovely place in hot weather. I suppose you are just at dinner now. I do hope your knee is much better before this. It seems to take so long to hear from you. I hope I shall get another letter to-morrow. I think I must close now. I feel like going to bed early. I had a very good night's sleep last night, and I hope I shall have another to-night. Perhaps I will add a line in the morning. Remember me to all. Your loving husband,
S. J. Kirtwood.

Monday morning - bright & pleasant, but cool. I found a vol. of Ruskin's 'Stones of Venice' in the Reading Room at the hotel. I got up early this morning and read most of the chapters on St. Mark's and the Ducal Palace. It will be a great help to me.